

MILEAGE.—MINORITY REPORT.

JANUARY 15, 1857.

Mr. KELSEY, from the Committee on Mileage, submitted the following views of the minority :

The minority of the Committee on Mileage, dissenting from some of the views entertained by the majority of the committee, beg leave to submit the following

REPORT.

The Constitution of the United States provides that "the senators and representatives shall receive a compensation for their services, to be ascertained by law, and paid out of the treasury of the United States." A strict construction of this language would seem to require the compensation of senators and representatives to be equal in amount. But at the time the Constitution was formed traveling was necessarily slow, fatiguing, and expensive; and much the hardest part of the duty of very many representatives was the performance of the journey to and from the seat of government to attend the sessions of Congress. In view of this state of things, the first Congress proceeded to enact a law fixing the compensation of senators and representatives. For the purpose of making the compensation paid to each senator and to each representative as nearly equal as possible, when compared with the time devoted by each to the public service and the expense necessarily incurred, the system of allowing mileage was adopted. The mileage was intended to compensate members for the time employed, as well as the expense incurred, in performing journeys that in many cases required several weeks of time.

The present rate of mileage was fixed in 1818, when railroads were unknown, and the navigation of our rivers and lakes by steam was in its infancy. The most safe and expeditious mode of traveling at that time was by the stage coach, which has now disappeared from the great thoroughfares of our country. Under this state of things the mileage allowed was probably no more than a fair compensation for the time and expense required to perform each journey. But this state of things no longer exists. One or two days is now sufficient to perform a journey that would then have required two or three weeks. And it cannot now be asked that compensation shall be given for the *time* required in traveling to attend the sessions, because, by the law passed at the last session, the *whole time* of each senator and repre-

sentative is paid for by the government. If the present mileage is retained, it makes really a vast difference in the compensation paid to members for their services. The pay of members has been increased because the expense of living has very largely increased since the pay was fixed in 1818. Why should not the mileage be reduced, when the expense of traveling has been so largely reduced within the same period of time?

The amount paid to members of the House and delegates for mileage at the first session of the 32d Congress was \$166,494. At the second session of the same Congress the amount paid was \$166,520. The amount paid at the first session of the 33d Congress was \$181,968, and at the second session of that Congress it was \$184,720. The amount paid at the first session of the present Congress was \$191,156, being about \$793 18 to each member and delegate. But this sum is very unequally divided. The delegates from Washington and Oregon Territories received \$5,960 each. One member from California received \$5,806, and the other received \$5,682; while one member from Maryland received but \$17 60, and two others from the same State received only \$32 each. The *seven* delegates received \$23,912 80, being an average of about \$3,816 to each; while *thirty-seven* members received only \$5,136 80, being an average of about \$138 83 to each.

As the whole time of each senator, representative, and delegate is now paid for by the government, there can no longer be any good reason for continuing the present mileage, which makes so great inequality in the compensation of members, and draws from the treasury a much larger sum than is necessary for this branch of the public service. The mileage should be so adjusted as to cover the actual and necessary expenses incurred by senators and representatives in traveling to attend the sessions. If less than this is given, it will be unjust to members who reside at the greatest distance from the Capitol. If more than is necessary for this purpose shall be allowed, it gives the distant members greater compensation than those who reside near the Capitol.

The bill proposes to allow the present mileage for two hundred and fifty miles or under, and ten cents per mile for all distances over two hundred and fifty miles. This allowance will undoubtedly be sufficient in all cases, not only to pay the actual traveling expenses, but to defray the incidental expenses of preparing for the journey; and it will reduce the aggregate amount paid for mileage about \$119,000 per session, compared with the amount paid at the first session of the present Congress.

The second section of the bill proposes to deduct twenty-five dollars per day from the pay of members for voluntary absence during the session. This proposition is so obviously just and proper, that no argument appears to be needed to sustain it. By the law, as it now stands, a member may be absent voluntarily every day of the session except the last, and still draw his pay for the recess and his mileage. The second section of the bill proposed by the minority will meet such a case as above supposed, and it will tend to secure the attendance of all the members during the entire session, except those who are compelled to be absent by reason of sickness. This section also has the approbation of the entire committee.

The minority of the committee do not agree upon all the details of the bill they have prepared; but they submit it to the House, so that the points upon which they do not agree may be decided by a vote of the House.

W. H. KELSEY,
J. H. WOODWORTH.

A BILL to amend an act entitled "An act to regulate the compensation of members of Congress," approved August 16, 1856.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That, instead of the mileage now allowed by law, there shall be allowed and paid, in the manner now prescribed by law, to each senator, representative, and delegate in Congress, the sum of eight dollars for every twenty miles actually and necessarily traveled from his residence, by the nearest usually traveled route, in going to and returning from two sessions only of each Congress, *provided* the distance so traveled does not exceed two hundred and fifty miles. And when the distance traveled, as aforesaid, exceeds two hundred and fifty miles, ten cents per mile shall be allowed and paid for such excess.

SECTION 2. *And be it further enacted,* That there shall be deducted, in the manner now prescribed by law, in lieu of the deduction now authorized by law, from the compensation allowed to each senator, representative, and delegate, the sum of twenty-five dollars for each day that such senator, representative, or delegate shall be absent from the Senate or House, respectively, when the Senate or House shall be in session, unless such senator, representative, or delegate shall be absent from his seat by reason of the sickness of himself or some member of his family.

